

**City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation  
Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission  
Watershed Conservation Authority  
West Basin Municipal Water District**

September 22, 2005

Mr. Lester A. Snow  
Director  
Department of Water Resources  
P.O. Box 942836  
Sacramento, CA 94236

Ms. Celeste Cantú  
Executive Director  
State Water Resources Control Board  
P.O. Box 100  
Sacramento, CA 95812

**SUBJECT: PROPOSITION 50 CHAPTER 8 INTEGRATED REGIONAL WATER  
MANAGEMENT GRANT PROGRAM: PLANNING GRANT AWARDS**

Dear Mr. Snow and Ms. Cantu:

We, the lead agencies for the four regions in Los Angeles County, are writing to you regarding the results of the scoring of the planning grant applications.

**BACKGROUND**

As stated in our August 25, 2005 letter to you, integrated water management planning in Los Angeles County is a tremendous challenge that we are all eager to continue. As you may know, the County has a population of well over 10 million people residing in 88 cities and vast unincorporated areas. Our four regional groups, formed in the latter half of 2004 in response to the Chapter 8 program, have taken on this challenge and, to date, have had tremendous success in beginning the process. Since that time, thousands of hours and hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent to bring dozens of stakeholder agencies and groups together to begin to articulate regional objectives, to develop water management strategies and to integrate projects across strategies and across regions. The result has been unprecedented cooperation among a multitude of agencies, non-profit organizations and other stakeholders.

**PLANNING GRANT APPLICATION SCORES AND INTERPRETATION**

We are concerned, however, that based on the scoring results, the ultimate distribution of this sole round of planning grant awards would leave Los Angeles County and Southern California in general with a disproportionately small fraction of the planning grant awards in relation to the population of the County, its complexity of issues, and its importance to water management in the State. As the scores are now presented, the results indicate that 75 percent of the funds available for planning grants will be awarded to 20 agencies in Northern California counties while only 25 percent will be awarded to only 7 agencies in Southern California counties. And, of the 7 agencies in Southern California, only one of the four regions in Los Angeles County will receive a planning grant award. Thus, with more than a quarter of the State's population, Los Angeles County would effectively receive less than 4 percent of the funding available for integrated planning.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

While the funding set aside for planning is small compared to the overall pool of money available through Chapter 8, the planning element of Chapter 8 is a critical first step toward the success of the program Statewide, and the prospect for success in Southern California is no exception to the need for a strong planning element. Each of the regions in Los Angeles County has already committed to providing local funds to the preparation of these plans with the reasonable expectation that State matching funds will be available. But even beyond the actual financial assistance provided by the grants, planning awards are an indication that the State is in fact encouraging the stakeholder groups that have formed across Los Angeles County to continue collaborative efforts to develop integrated plans.

To accomplish this, we strongly encourage you to distribute planning grant funding on a 50/50 basis between Northern California and Southern California. Some type of delineation between North and South is well supported by language in the Water Code:

*Section 79564.1. (a) Of the funds made available by Section 79560, not less than 40 percent shall be available for eligible projects in northern California and not less than 40 percent be available for eligible projects in southern California, subject to a determination by the administering agency that each project meets all of the requirements of this chapter.*

In addition, we believe that an equitable distribution of funding is further supported by the Southern California voters and, in particular those in Los Angeles County, who voted 65 percent in favor of Proposition 50, thus ensuring its passage.

## **CLOSING**

Los Angeles County has embraced the Proposition 50 IRWM Program and the improvement in statewide integrated water planning that we believe it is already fostering. Collaboration is already occurring not only within the regions that submitted planning grant applications, but across them as well. As the lead representatives of these regions, we request that your agencies ultimately make planning grant award recommendations that are well balanced and offer the best chance of success to regional planning throughout the entire State.

We appreciate your leadership on this issue and are available should you wish to discuss our concerns in more detail.

Very truly yours,

Shelley Luce  
Executive Director  
Santa Monica Bay Restoration Authority

Belinda Faustinos  
Executive Officer  
Watershed Conservation Authority

Richard Nagel  
Co-General Manager  
West Basin Municipal Water District

Art Aguilar  
Co-General Manager  
West Basin Municipal Water District

Joseph E. Mundine  
Assistant Director II  
City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation